SABBATH READING.

NON-POLITICAL: NON-SECTARIAN.

"DETERMINED NOT TO KNOW ANYTHING AMONG YOU SAVE JESUS CHRIST."

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BEHOLD WHAT SWEET STORY.

There's peace and good-will everywhere upon this day of days;
On midnight and on morning air is born the note of praise—
For Jesus the lowly, the gracious and holy,
Makes cheery a weary world.
On banner of glory behold what sweet story
Of peace and redemption unfurled.

Nor dread nor sadness anywhere should reign upon this day,
Since Christ hath come to lift all care and walk earth's rugged way—
For Jesus the lowly, the mighty and holy,
Makes cheery a weary world.
On banner of glory behold what sweet story
Of grace and of comfort unfurled.

Blest tidings unto everyone this precious season brings,
With gift of gifts in God's dear Son, proclaimed the King of kings—
For Jesus the lowly, the royal and holy,
Makes cheery a weary world.
On banner of glory behold what sweet story
Of power and of promise unfurled.

Bring yew and holly gay, fruits of earth to homage pay;
Let strength and brightness intertwine upon this festive day—
For Jesus the lowly, the faithful and holy,
Makes cheery a weary world.
On banner of glory behold what sweet story
Of "durable riches" unfurled.

—LILLIAN F. LEWIS.

CAIN.

"I WANT those berries, Charlie, but I can't go up after them, the bank's so steep," complained my little cousin. "Won't you get 'em for me? Oh, there's Cain."

It was an ugly nickname for anyone, and especially ugly when fitted to the handsome lad who stood on the steep bank above us, looking down with a curious sort of shrinking in his delicate face.

"You can't get up here," he called down to us, after a minute's pause, it's too steep from the road. What is it you want, Penrhyn?"

"That big bunch of blackberries up there," little Arthur Penrhyn answered, shrinking closer to me with sudden and—to me—quite unaccountable shyness. "There, where the white butterflies are fighting, Cain—quite close to the gate."

At the sound of the hateful nickname the lad's face altered again, and grew old with a curious rigid patience that seemed to change its character altogether.

"I see them," he said. "I'll get them for you Penrhyn. Stand away from below."

He had torn down the great bunch Arthur had pointed out, and after a minute's struggle with the briars that clung to his hands and hair, he scrambled nimbly down the bank and laid the blackberries in Arthur's basket, then turned away and passed through the open gate to the meadow beyond.

"You didn't thank him," I said reprovingly. "What made you so rude, Arthur? And who is he, and why do you call him Cain?"

"We all do," answered Arthur, demolishing a handful of ripe blackberries. "The Board School boys call it after him in the streets—we don't. His father lives in that big white house we passed yesterday, and his mother was in church on Sunday."

"I forgot all about Cain till a day or two later, when I was calling on my cousin Ada, who had married a curate, and was reminded of my encounter by the exhibition of a drawing of her first-born's in which Cain and Abel were depicted in a hand to hand conflict.

"By the way," I said, "Bertie's effort recalls to mind—no, not an old master—but a young gentleman I encountered the other day, whom your small brother treated very cavalierly, and called Cain. Do you know anything about him?"

"I should think I did," Ada said gravely. "Why he and Herbert read Greek together—though I never like to have him in the house, really, you know. I hate horrors, Charlie."

"Is he a horror?" I inquired patiently.

"I should think so!" Ada exclaimed. "Why don't you know the story, Charlie? No? Really? Well, I'll tell you. His name is Lionel Jerome, and his parents live in the White House—near the river, you know. Well—when this boy, Lionel, was about five years old, another son was born; and Mrs. Jerome, who was always an indifferent mother, petted this baby and neglected the elder boy so much that Lionel grew dreadfully jealous, and one day, when they were in the garden together—little Bertram was just toddling then—pushed him down some steps, and poor little Bertram broke his neck, or fractured his skull, or something. Anyhow, he died, and somehow the nickname has clung to Lionel, though it was eleven years ago. It nearly killed Mrs. Jerome, and Capt. Jerome's hair turned quite gray. Isn't it a dreadful story, Charlie? One can't help pitying the poor boy, can one? You couldn't, Charlie, if you went to the White House, as I have done, and seen and heard how Capt. and Mrs. Jerome look and speak to him."

"It's a pity they haven't mercy enough to send him away to school or abroad," I said. "What purgatory for the poor lad! Can't Herbert do anything, Ada?"

"He tried once, and Capt. Jerome has never forgiven him. He is a hard man," said Ada, with a shiver; "but oh, it is dreadful to think that your own child is a murderer, Charlie. Well, don't let's talk about sad things any longer. Come into the next room and see if Herbert's there. He should be."

She slipped her hand through my arm and, half dragging me into the next room, which was Herbert Ralston's study, peered round in a short-sighted way, and suddenly stood still, turning very pale.

"Oh!" she whispered, "he has heard, and I forgot he was here. "Oh, Charlie! what shall I do?"

I stood looking at the figure at the writing-table, as taken aback as she. What could we say, or, indeed, what words could avail if Lionel Jerome had, indeed, heard his own story told by an acquaintance to an absolute stranger? And he had heard; there was no doubt about that. As I stood I could see that the fingers were tightly clenched, that the teeth were set deep in the nether lip, and the forehead was furrowed with deep lines of pain.

"What nerve he must have," I said to myself, "to hear that and hold his tongue and write on! Upon my word, he is plucky!"

I looked round at the rustle of feminine skirts. Ada had beat a retreat and left me alone. So with considerable trepidation I nailed my colors to the mast and walked up to the writing-table, trying to look cool and unconcerned.

"I quite expected to find Mr. Ralston at home," I said. "I suppose he will be back soon. You have seen him lately, of course?"

"He went out half an hour ago," said Lionel Jerome, glancing at me for a moment. "I don't think he will be gone long, now."

"Ada—oh! she is gone on household cares intent," I said. "I meant her to introduce me, but I must be my own sponsor. I am Charlie Enfield, Mrs. Ralston's unworthy cousin."

"I think Mrs. Ralston mentioned my name," Lionel Jerome said, looking up at me with something like defiance in his dark eyes.

"Now I come to think of it, I believe she did," I returned. "Now the preliminaries are arranged, shall we begin on the weather, Mr. Jerome? It is very fine."

"But it's going to rain."

A gleam of fun came into the brown eyes.

"It rains part of every day here in Alder, Mr. Enfield. Are you better off in London?"

"I don't come from London," I said, "worse luck! At present I am quartered in Middlingbrough, where the weather is'nt often middling—it's generally and superlatively bad."

"Oh!" you are in the army?"

"In the Argyl Horse," I said with some complacency.

Lionel Jerome smiled.

"My father's old regiment," he said. "He will be glad to see you, Mr. Enfield, if you care to come to the White House. I—I hope you will—a visitor would do my father good, I think, he leads too quiet a life."

"And you!" I said, thoughtlessly.

"I am used to it," Lionel Jerome said quietly. "Habit is second nature, you know, Mr. Enfield. Are you going?"

"Yes. I can't waste my afternoon

waiting for Ralston. I shall look in again this evening. What, are you going, too?"

"I promised to write out these notes, and I have done them. Mr. Ralston will not expect me to wait."

"Shall we walk together, then? We go the same way, I think?"

"No," abruptly; then in a different tone: "I beg your pardon, Mr. Enfield, I am afraid I am very rude. But—our ways must be different, you know."

I put my hands out impulsively, and made him shake hands with me, willy-nilly; and that was the beginning of our friendship. It grew slowly and steadily after that; and I was made free of the White House, and helped, I think, to take a few briars out of the poor lad's way. His father was never actively unkind to him, that I must admit; but the very tone of his voice was a stab, and I have seen poor young Lionel flush up and wince as if he were under the surgeon's knife when his father's cold eyes met his. Mrs. Jerome was neither passively nor actively unkind. She was a semi-invalid and very seldom seen. So, as I have said, our friendship grew until the day that saw a frightful accident in Wheal Mears, a coal mine, in which even listless Capt. Jerome took some amount of interest. Of course, we all went over to the scene of the accident, but I was, unluckily, too late to make one of the rescuing party, and there was nothing for me to do but to stand helplessly at the mouth of the shaft, waiting till the rescue party came back.

"Lal Jerome's one of them," our regimental surgeon, little Nasmyth Laurie, said in my ear as the cage came laboring up, laden with half a dozen more or less wounded men. "I hope he won't go throwing his life away. I must go now and bandage these poor chaps up. You lend a helping hand where you are, Charlie; I've too many amateur nurses already."

The cage went down again and yet again, and when the last load of wounded men was drawn up, Lionel Jerome came up with them. He was blackened with coal and dust from head to foot, and though his hands were badly torn he was busy at once, helping the doctor more quickly and more quietly than any other of the amateur dressers. Then he turned away suddenly, and left us without a word.

"Is he hurt?" Dr. Laurie said in my ear. "Go after him, Enfield; make him get home and have his cut hands bathed and bandaged up. Yes, we can do without you; and to-night before I go home, I'll look Jerome up; he ought to be proud of his boy."

I washed the coal dust from my face and hands, and hurried off in Lionel's wake wondering a little that he had not waited for me. He was not in the high-road, nor yet in the meadow; but at the gate leading into the White House garden I found him, fumbling blindly with the bolts.

"Let me do it," I said; "you'll only hurt your hands worse Jerome. What made you rush off like that, old chap? Why—hold up, lad—what's the matter?" I put my arm round him and held him up just as he was falling. "You've knocked yourself up, I suppose."

Lionel absolutely laughed.

"I've knocked myself to bits—I hope so," he said, breathlessly. "Don't touch me, Enfield—I can't hold up any more."

He was down at my feet now, in a huddled heap; but in another minute Captain Jerome had answered my shout for help, and between us we got the boy into the house and up to his own room. He fainted then, and we had literally to cut his clothes off him, and when we had washed the dust and dirt off, his father and I stood and looked at each other with horrified eyes across the boy's maimed body. For, as we afterward learned, there had been a fresh fall of coal as the rescue party arrived in the Blaise Shaft; and, as Lionel had said, he was literally almost knocked to pieces, while from head to heel he was bruised and torn as if he had been among wild beasts' teeth and claws.

How on earth he could have held up so long, and walked, with all those wounds sucking his strength away, from Mears to the White House I cannot guess; but it had been done, and now he lay with hardly a groan, though our unskilful handling must have tortured him almost beyond endurance.

"Don't hurry Doctor Laurie," he said, imperatively, when I talked of riding over to Mears to fetch the doctor. "He can't do anything, you know—and don't let him frighten my mother."

"I will see to your mother," Captain Jerome said, coldly still. "Are you faint again, Lionel? Have you your flask here, Enfield? Here, drink this! Give it to him, will you, while I try to set this broken wrist of his. Hush!" as Lionel moaned a little under his handling. "Have some self-command, boy! I can't help hurting you, and it has got to be set. Please hold his arm steady, will you, Enfield?"

He was touching the shattered bones with a skill and coolness which absolutely revolted me, though Lionel took his father's rough surgery—and sharp rebuke, when he gave an involuntray cry—with a patience that was beyond my comprehension. When we were through with our bandaging, Dr. Laurie came in, and the whole ghastly business had to be gone through again; and when he had seen all there was to be seen, the little doctor shook his head.

"Give him an opiate, and have done with it," I begged.

But Laurie shook his head again.

"I daren't—yet. Is there pen and ink in the next room, Capt. Jerome? Can you come here a minute, Enfield? Yes; he'll be all right alone for a minute or two."

We went into the next room—a spare bedroom—and stood silently looking at each other's faces for a good two minutes. Then Laurie spoke.

"I never heard of a pluckier thing! but he's done for, poor boy. I don't want to be technical, but he's just broken to pieces. Please Heaven, he won't last very long now; and when the pain gets too bad to bear, I'll give him an opiate, and let him just sleep himself away. Will you break it to your wife, Capt. Jerome?"

But the father was not listening; he had dropped on the nearest chair, and was shaking and sobbing with his head between his hands.

"Oh! Absalom—my son Absalom!"

"Don't call names," Laurie said, in a fierce whisper. "Thank Heaven for your boy's pluck and obstinacy, and—— On my soul, Capt. Jerome, I think you'd better thank Heaven, too, for taking him; the boy hasn't had so happy a life here."

"No," Capt. Jerome muttered. "And now—with all his sins upon him, he is going——"

"To a kinder Father than you," snarled the doctor. "Stand away, man, and let me go. I've got a dozen more men to see to. I'll be back by ten, Enfield, with the opiate. I recommend you to keep out of your son's sight, Capt. Jerome; you've set his broken wrist very neatly, and there's nothing more for you to do. Let him see his mother if he wants to, and——"

We were back in Lionel's room now, and Laurie stooped and touched, very gently, the bandaged hand plucking at the coverlet.

"We are all very proud of your pluck, my lad—and I am going down to tell your mother all about it." Lionel's white face flushed a little, and his brows contracted sharply, but he said nothing, and Laurie went on. "I am off about my business now, Lionel, but I shall be back by and by, and then we'll see that you get some sleep. Is the pain so very bad?" resting his hand for a minute on the laboring chest.

"It's—not—past bearing," Lionel said, breathlessly.

Then Laurie turned away, and Lionel faced toward me, his eyes dull again and his mouth set.

"I heard a noise—in the next room. Who's—in there?" He was shivering now so violently that the light iron bedstead was shaking under him, and he had thrown up both bandaged hands to cover his eyes. "Not my father? Oh, no—not my father? Don't let him in."

"Jerome," I said very gently, "will you listen? Your father is there and wants to see you. My poor lad, don't look like that," as the boy shrank down among his pillows with a cry. "You shall not see him if you don't wish. What is the matter, Lionel?"

"My name's Cain," Lionel said with a shudder. Oh! let me get up and go—don't let my father in."

I put my arms hurriedly round him to keep him down, but I need not have been afraid, for he had not strength enough to stand upright.

"Lie down, my dear boy! Lie down!" I said. "Lionel, do you hear me? You must lie still or I won't answer for the consequences. Dr. Laurie will be here soon, and he shall give you a sleeping-draught."

"I don't want it." Lionel was talking quite coherently now, and his restless hands had quieted under my touch. "I didn't mean to be a coward, only"—biting his lips hard—"this pain—this pain! Don't let my father in?"

In the course of my next two hours' watching, I learned one or two secrets of the White House menage; and I understood that Capt. Jerome's system of constant repression, punishment and harshness, had not only made his son's sensitive, passionate nature atone for the irresponsible crime of his babyhood by years of slow torture, but had actually kindled in his boy's starved heart an extraordinary dumb, dog-like love for the father who had judged him so hardly. He feared his father's possible rebukes for cowardice much more than he feared those spasms of pain which caught him again and again; and when they wrung him till he was forced to cry out, Lionel's failing voice always called, first of all, "Shut the door, Enfield—lock it—don't let my father in!" I wondered what his father, listening in the next room, thought of it all; and I was not greatly surprised when—Lionel being at the worst—the door creaked a little, and Capt. Jerome came quickly up to the bed, and took the boy's maimed body into his arms.

"My poor Lal! my brave Lal! it won't be long now."

Lionel gave a great cry and a start, and then his father's kisses stopped the

faltering words on his lips. There was silence then, only broken by Dr. Laurie's arrival.

"He doesn't need your opiates, doctor," Capt. Jerome said, with a half smile. "Look! he's asleep."

"So I see," Laurie said, in a changed tone. "No; I and my opiates are not wanted now. Will you let me lay him down, Jerome?"

"No, no. Let him be, Laurie. I tell you he wants nothing more of you."

"Nor of anyone else in this world," Dr. Laurie said gravely. "Come, Enfield, we are not wanted here."—Household Words.

"BUT."

BY PASTOR THEODORE MONOD.

I PROPOSE to direct your attention specially to one little word—abig little word—of one syllable, which you will find in a number of passages—the word BUT. It occupies a very considerable place in th intercourse of man with man. It is a very strange word, that suddenly alters matters altogether—turns the tables as it were.

You find yourself in a financial difficulty, let me suppose. You write to a friend asking him to lend you, say, £20. He answers immediately in a very fine letter, which begins with expressions of affection and sympathy with you in your trouble; yet you are not quite satisfied with that beginning, because you feel that something unwelcome is sure to follow. Here it comes: "But I am very sorry I cannot do anything for you."

Or, on the other hand, one of your children is very ill. The doctor comes in and examines the child carefully, and he looks very grave. You walk with him into the next room and you say: "Well, doctor, what do you think of it?" He says "It is a very, very serious case" —and your heart goes down—"but"—at once your heart goes up like a lark into the blue—"but with God's help we will make him well again."

Such is the power of "but." Paul, who was constantly reasoning and arguing, uses the word continually in the Epistle to the Romans.

Let me point out a few instances. The first I notice is in chap. 3; it is a well-known passage, but it will do us good to read it over again. Let us begin with verse 19: "What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped." (We thought of that a little while ago when our chairman read in Job: "I will put my hand upon my mouth.") "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

Now, suppose some one, reading this passage, should stop at this point, and say: "Such is the doctrine of justification"; what would you think of him and of his Gospel? Would you not exclaim, with one voice: "Read on, man; read on!" And he would read on—"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God—" (It is no question of deeds now, but of the righteousness of God. It is no question of law, but a question of grace and of faith,) "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

There may be some here—very likely there are some—who have not yet understood this. Shall I suppose there are some who do not even know and feel that they are guilty and condemned before God? Why, you are self-condemned, and you know it; how much more are you condemned before God! What can you do to justify yourselves? Nothing. Listen to this, then: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested," and you are justified freely by the grace of God.

But I speak now to you who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and have found peace in believing. What next? Then, very likely, you have said to yourself, "I will now obey the law of God. I am grateful to God; I love Him because He loved me first." And you have done your best to obey the law of God. Have you succeeded? That is the question. I read in chapter 7: 14, of this Epistle to the Romans: "We know that the law is spiritual; but (a bad but, this) I am carnal." The law is all right; I admire the law; I know it is good. Paul even goes so far as to say (v. 25): "With the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

Suppose I should stop there and should tell you that this is the Bible teaching as to sanctification, you would again exclaim: "Read on; read on!" I read on, then: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do * * *" It could not justify me, but God justifies me through Jesus Christ. So the law cannot sanctify me; the flesh cannot sanctify me; self-effort cannot sanctify me; but God can, and will, and does sanctify me through the Holy Spirit: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Why? "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally-minded its death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Observe, it is not "they that are in the flesh do not please God so much as others;" it is "they cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." Observe, again, that it is not for a special class of Christians who wish to rise higher than others; not at all. "If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you; now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." Have you got the Spirit of Christ? Do you believe that just as God has freely given His Son to bear your sins, He has freely given the Spirit, to give you the victory over sin?

How are we to get the life of the Spirit? What is the first step? The first step comes here: "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin"—just because Christ died; not because you feel it. You find people stopping for weeks and months, perhaps years, saying they do not feel dead. You will never feel dead. The only way is to believe that you have died with Christ, and in Christ. Even a strongly rationalistic commentor says: "We are not to interpret this as though Paul meant it to be merely a kind of illustration: an ideal thing." It was to him an altogether real thing, that "he had died on the Cross of Christ. Therefore, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

What then? "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Why should you obey it when it is no longer your master! "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Those same members that have been instruments of unrighteousness shall become instruments of righteousness unto God. Those same members in which dwells the law of sin, shall be made instruments of righteousness unto God, because you shall live no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

And, finally, He says to them: "What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Here is another "but"; "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now, shall we remember this, when the enemy comes, as he will come, as he is coming now, perhaps, trying to trouble us and to frighten us. When he says, "You are vile and guilty, you are unworthy and condemned," let us reply, "It is true, but the gift of God is eternal life, and I have eternal life." When he comes again and says, "You are ignorant, you are weak; you are utterly unable to cope with me, with the world, with the flesh, let us reply: "It is true, but the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." That little word but is enough to put him to confusion.—London Christian.

SIMPLE FAITH OF IRISH ROMAN CATHOLICS.

I OFTEN find that Roman Catholics have a strength of belief in the power of prayer which may well teach Protestants a lesson. It is true that they look upon prayer as, in some sense, a charm; but nevertheless, I have felt reproached for my own want of faith when witnessing the trust of some poor ignorant peasant in the fatherly goodness of God.

Passing by the house of an old widow lately, I was stopped by her grandson, who begged me to come in to see her, "Shure she was dying intirely, and couldn't catch her breath."

I went in, to find the old woman sitting up in bed, gasping in bronchitis, and making herself far worse by sobs and cries for aid. "Oh, help me, Miss, jewel!" she wailed, seizing me by both hands. "Oh, give me relafe!"

"I wish I could, Mrs. C——; we must get on a mustard plaster at once, and give you some medicine. Let Jack follow us to the house for them. In the meantime do try to be quiet; you will only increase the choking if you go on like this."

"But I'll die afore he comes back; oh! do help me!"

I was preparing to get what remedies were at hand, when she clung to me more closely. "Pray for me, that's what I want; last time you prayed I got relief; that's what'll cure me."

Very willingly I knelt at the bedside and committed her to God's hands, whether in health or sickness, in life or death, and to the Saviour who alone is sufficient to supply every need. She ac-

companied me with constant ejaculations, "Blessed Jesus, hear us! Holy Mary, have mercy on us! Almighty Father, bless us."

It was no time for controversy, for the woman's state was really dangerous. I went on praying, quietly and soothingly. By degrees her sobs ceased and her gasping became less distressing. She had faith to be healed. I left her composed and trustful. I found that God's blessing had been with the remedies which were sent to her later on, and that half an hour after my visit she was in a fair way to recovery. It was a matter of deep thankfulness to me.

In a wretched cabin sunk below the level road, and fronted by a heap of manure, lived two old people, a brother and sister, called Biddy and Jimmy P——. They had few relations and yet many friends, for Jimmy was the best cow doctor in all the country round, and was constantly in request by farmers in the neighborhood. Alas! these friends did not show themselves friendly in a true sense, for they considered that Jimmy must be liberally supplied with whiskey while helping them with their cattle. The frail old man came at last almost to live upon spirits, having no comfort at home, after the death of his sister.

Biddy was afflicted for many months by an immense cancerous tumor on the lip, which disfigured her so greatly that she rarely stirred beyond her threshold, shunning the eyes of mankind. It was little wonder that she grew wretched and bitter, though ever gentle towards me. In course of time the tumor seemed absorbed, and the unsightly lump fell off; but the poison spread now throughout her system, and Biddy felt that death was creeping over her. She would not acknowledge her weakness, nor go to bed. Day and night were spent crouched upon some sacks in a corner of the filthy cabin; her brother absent: her door shut; with no companions but her cats, and her own sad thoughts.

I went every day, when possible, to take her a little nourishment, and make her more comfortable, and she hung on the words of life which were spoken "as she was able to bear them"; a Psalm, a few scattered texts, now and then a prayer. They were all lovely, she said, "but I'm not going to die; won't I get better, Miss? shure I'm stronger to-day."

It was sad to see and hear her. Old, desolate, diseased, without one spot of brightness in all the present, past, or future, here was she clinging to life; determined not to lose her hold on the seen, as she could not realize the unseen. I told her of the glorious Home which God had prepared for such as she; but Biddy shook her head doubtfully. "I hope so," was all she dared allow, with the remembrance of sins and the fears of purgatory haunting her.

I knew she must soon die, and kept on striving to open her dull eyes to the Saviour's all-sufficient redemption, to the "far better" things which He died to purchase, richer than any world at its best could give. But day after day passed, when I asked, "Biddy, are you willing to do Christ's will? Are you content to leave this pain, and loneliness, and misery to be with Him?" she would reply, "I suppose so." Then came the pathetic appeal so often reiterated: "But won't I get over this? Won't I be well again an' be able to get about?"

Hardly any one came to see her. The house grew more filthy, the disease more repulsive. I had to go and wash out her broken cup, and carry water from a well even to give her drink. I do not think the priest knew of her state. One day the end was very near. "Biddy, the Lord Jesus will soon come for your soul; don't fight against Him any longer; do say to Him that you are content to die."

It had seemed as though her determination not to face death had held it in abeyance so far. She raised sunken, glittering eyes to my face, "Then you think I can't live any longer?" "Yes, Biddy, you are going to the Saviour; are you ready?"

She sank back on her sack-pillow with folded hands. Yes, I'm content; the Lord's will be done. Have pity on a poor sinner, blessed Jesus!" Peace entered that squalid cabin, and a June sunbeam lit up the calm on her dying face. Once more I prayed for her—the brother who had come in standing reverently by with uncovered head; and, as she repeated falteringly a few words of the Lord's Prayer, I felt that we were in the presence of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Two days later Biddy passed quietly away.

Her brother lived on in sadness and solitude, falling more deeply under the power of drink. Ill, miserable and neglected, a little while ago he became confined to the house, and hung over the fire all day, too asthmatic to lie down. I asked him if he remembered what he used to hear me saying to Biddy. "Indade I do, dear lady; poor Biddy!" He was wandering a little in mind, and I tried to gain his attention.

"Jimmy, you say you are dying; tell me in whom do you trust for salvation?" "In the Lord, shurely; who else would I trust?"

"No one, no one. Can you fix your hope on Him only to wash away your sin?" "Yes! God help me, God forgive me." He was not able to listen longer.

Next day the priest came, and neighbors worried the dying man with business matters, but I believe that "He who knoweth what is in man" saw the yearnings of that poor soul, and satisfied them. "Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—C. M. B., in London Christian.

London's Open Gate to Hell.

THE "War Cry" publishes this talk with Mrs. Harding, who superintends the Salvation Army rescue work in the neighborhood of Piccadilly, one of the worst haunts of vice in all the world:

"Some people seem to think, Mrs. Harding, that rescue work is comparatively useless, for they say that for every dozen girls taken off the Piccadilly streets there are as many waiting to take their place."

"I wish they were 'waiting.' If it were a question of this dozen or that, we might hesitate; but look you, as long as Self rules men, there is no 'waiting' about it. The dozen referred to may die in the gutter for all they care, but they will move earth and heaven to bring others into the market. If this were not so, why don't half of them keep at home with their wives?"

"What is your idea about this Piccadilly vice market, major? Why has this particular spot been chosen for hell's carnival?"

"The chief attraction would be found in the proximity to the theatres, music-halls and clubs. As everyone knows, quite a number of ballet-girls find their way to the Piccadilly streets every year; in fact, the men made a practice of visiting the music-halls and theatres for the express purpose of enticing the last young girl who has come to London fresh from the country.

"At first these girls are well paid, and life opens to them like a Summer's day, but it is not long before they are made to 'reap the whirlwind.' First one man casts them off, and then another, until they are compelled to take to the streets, and are completely at the mercy of the landlady, who does not scruple to turn them into the streets without decent clothes if their rent is not paid. Sometimes people wonder what the girls do with all the money their sin brings in, but it all goes to the publican, landlady, and dressmakers. 'The lust of the eye' plays a large part in the inferno, and the girl who loses her fine clothes has lost half her capital.

"Gilded sin always commands the highest price. Men hate to see the effects of sin in their victims. They are the death's heads at their feasts. So the paint pot is called into requisition, and art is used to cover up the serpent's trails."

"You have been several years storming this stronghold of Satan; do you feel that any impression has been made on the people you are seeking to help?"

"Decidedly! The women have been convinced that we love them and seek their good, many have responded to our efforts and are to-day living honest lives but even those who have not the moral courage to leave their sin, respect us, and show it by the way they take our part against the men.

"Then there is great improvement among the police, who content themselves now with moving us on indiscriminately here and there. We come across one with a special gift for moving the wheat, but as a rule they are impartial in their favors."

"How would you classify the girls you meet with on Piccadilly?"

"Something like this: Actresses, ballet girls, barmaids, shop assistants, governesses, and a sprinkling of servant girls. In time, however, they all sink to the same level, and the quantity they drink has much to do with the rapidity with which they reach the gutter."

"Still, Mrs. Harding, don't you feel very discouraged about these girls?"

"Not one bit; but I'll tell you what I do feel discouraged about, and that is the men. No conscience, no heart, and no shame. Let me give you an instance of this. Only the other night a city gentleman touched me on the shoulder at one o'clock in the morning on Piccadilly streets, and said, in an oily voice, 'I thought I would like to give you a little encouragement by telling you how a lady I was with last night took your part when something was said against you.'

"Only think of it! 'Encourage me,' I said. 'I wonder you dare use such a word when your very presence on these streets is in itself a discouragement. What about your influence—what are you doing with that? How are you going to meet the lives you have ruined by your viciousness?'"

"He slunk away like the sorry creature that he was. Yes, that's the discouragement—men are such cowards.

"Where are the rescued men to-day I want to know? Why don't they go to their brethren? When a woman gets rescued she invariably goes straight away like the woman of old, and says, 'Come, see a Man who has saved me, and can save you, too'; but not so with the men."

Read our offers on pages 14, 15 and 16.

For Sabbath Reading.

Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor

TOPIC FOR DECEMBER 29.

HOW NEXT YEAR MAY BE MADE BETTER THAN THIS HAS BEEN.—Phil. 3: 7-14.

It is our duty and privilege to make each year better than the preceding one.

"Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. 3: 13, 14. "Therefore leaving the principles (beginnings) of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."—Heb. 6: 1, 2. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."—Heb. 12: 1, 2. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you: that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work."—2 Cor. 9: 8.

We must look to God more confidently for power to gain the victory over self.

"Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."—1 Cor. 15: 57, 58. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."—1 Cor. 10: 13. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."—Phil. 2: 12, 13. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—Phil. 4: 13.

We must be more helpful to others.

"Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you he shall not lose his reward."—Mark 9: 41. "Ye sent once and again unto my necessity."—Phil. 4: 16. "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus: for he oft refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain."—2 Tim. 1: 16. "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good."—Rom. 15: 12. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."—Gal. 6: 2.

We are about to begin another year. We are having another chance—our life over again. What a grand thing this is! How can we make 1896 better than 1895 in our lives and in our work? That's the question before all Christian Endeavorers and all Christian workers—a question personal to each individual member. Only a small percentage work as if they meant business. If, instead of helping only just a little we help a great deal, that will make the New Year vastly better than the old one—more shoulders to the wheel in zeal and knowledge. We'll do better work if we assume that where the work lags the blame is ours individually. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done," may be on our lips, but hindered by our conduct—yours and mine.

In the last year we met a gentleman engaged in mission work, who used to say now and then at the close of the meetings, "If we haven't done any good, I hope we haven't done any harm by our presentation of the truth." Very good. That's the spirit—pure service an offering sure to be accepted. The world is watching us. We need to be careful. If we find, in going over the methods and the manners of 1895, any of that too-prevalent poison—self-glorification—let the hurtful thing be wholly eliminated, that God alone may have all the glory. Let us keep all human flies out of the divine ointment. We must not forget this, that the wedding garment is a soul wrap made up of these parts: Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. St. Paul got well whipped for defending the truth—such is this cruel world. The reward is beyond.

He is working on fine lines who says to himself that this and that said and done in 1895 must not be repeated in 1896. We hesitated here and didn't there—both mistakes, and it looks as if we took counsel more from earth than from Heaven. We ought to do better work and make our society more felt the next year, round about us. We have gained enlarged experience! Growth in grace means more wisdom to-day than we had yesterday. What impression has our society made upon the nation and the world? Has it turned multitudes unto God? The heavenly power is given to individuals and societies for that very purpose—soul winning. Are the communities better for our organizations? Are the churches fuller and the jails emptier? Do our people read more wisely, or are the misleading indecent papers in larger circulation than ever? Is there more and better religion in the home since we organized?

How to Conquer.

BY GENERAL BOOTH,

IF you want to be a conqueror you will have to work, you will have to fight. So far as my own career is concerned, I can safely say that I was saved from destruction, humanly speaking, by struggling to save other people. Almost directly after my conversion God laid me on the bed of affliction, taking me to the verge of the river with a bad fever. I went straight from that bed into the streets and lanes of my native town, and five nights a week, and incessantly on the Sabbath, in open air and in cottages, toiled in Salvation Army style for the salvation of souls. Men and devils opposed me; sorrows and disappointments of the bitterest kind were my lot; temptations of the most insidious character followed and assaulted me at every turn, but the work of saving the lost became the passion of my life, and bound me hand and foot to Jesus Christ! I found then what I have found ever since, and what I find to-day, that, humanly speaking, there are, in work for the souls of others, safety and grace and wisdom, and all the blessings that a man needs to conquer devils and keep away depression and fear. See that your motives are pure and your object the glory of God and the salvation of men: then rush to the battle's front and live and die there.—Young Soldier.

DAILY BREAD.

SABBATH.

Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee. O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy. Psalm 67: 3.

Let all the lands with shouts of joy
To God their voices raise;
Sing psalms in honor of His name,
And spread His glorious praise.

All the earth shall worship Thee, and shall sing unto Thee; they shall sing to Thy name. Psalm 66: 4.

MONDAY.

Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. Psalm 30: 4.

Ye sons of men with joy record
The various wonders of the Lord;
And let His power and goodness sound
Through all your tribes, the earth around.

All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee. Psalm 145: 10.

TUESDAY.

Be filled with the Spirit * * * singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Ephesians 5: 18.

God of my life, through all my days
My grateful powers shall sound Thy praise;
The song shall wake with opening light,
And warble to the silent night.

I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. Psalm 104: 33.

WEDNESDAY.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2: 14.

Hark, hark to the angels all singing in Heaven,
"To God in the highest all glory be given."
To thee, then, O Jesus, this day of Thy birth,
Be glory and honor through Heaven and earth.

Unto you is born this day * * * a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2: 11.

THURSDAY.

Sing forth the honor of His name; make His praise glorious. Psalm 66: 2.

Glory and praise to God our King,
We with angels join to sing;
Lifting our strains of praise on high,
Holy, thrice holy, Lord, we cry.

I will praise the name of God with a song, and magnify Him with thanksgiving. Psalm 66: 30.

FRIDAY.

O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things. Psalm 98: 1.

Sing to the Lord, ye sons of grace,
Sing to the Lord in songs of praise;
Sing of the wonders He hath done,
Sing of the victories He hath won.

I will praise Thee, O Lord, among the people; I will sing unto Thee among the nations. Psalm 57: 9.

SATURDAY.

Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord. Psalm 68: 32.

We praise and magnify Thy name,
O Lord, and tell abroad Thy fame;
We worship Thee, eternal King;
And to Thy name glad praises sing.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. 1 Tim. 1: 17.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Thou to the mercy seat our souls dost gather,
To do our duty unto Thee . . OUR FATHER.

To whom all praise, all honor should be given:
For Thou art the great God . . WHO ART IN HEAVEN.

Thou, by Thy wisdom, rul'st the world's whole frame,
Forever, therefore, . . HALLOWED BE THY NAME;

Let nevermore delay divide us from
Thy glorious grace, but let . . THY KINGDOM COME;

Let Thy commands opposed be by none,
But Thy good pleasure and . . THY WILL BE DONE.

And let our promptness to obey be even
The very same . . IN EARTH AS 'TIS IN HEAVEN.

Then for our souls, O Lord, we also pray,
Thou wouldst be pleased to . . GIVE US THIS DAY

The food of life, wherewith our souls are fed,
Sufficient raiment, and . . OUR DAILY BREAD;

With every needful thing do Thou relieve us,
And of Thy mercy, pity . . AND FORGIVE US

All our misdeeds, for Him whom Thou did'st please
To make an offering for . . OUR TRESPASSES.

And forasmuch, O Lord, as we believe
That Thou wilt pardon us . . AS WE FORGIVE,

Let that love teach, wherewith Thou dost acquaint us
To pardon all . . THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US;

And though, sometimes, Thou find'st we have forgot
This love for Thee, yet help . . AND LEAD US NOT,

Through soul or body's want to desperation,
Nor let earth's gain drive us . . INTO TEMPTATION;

Let not the soul of any true believer
Fall in the time of trial. . . BUT DELIVER.

Yea, save them from the malice of the Devil,
And both in life and death, keep . . US FROM EVIL.

Thus pray we, Lord, for that of Thee, from whom
This may be had . . FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM.

This world is of Thy work its wondrous story,
To Thee belongs . . THE POWER AND THE GLORY,

And all Thy wondrous works have ended never,
But will remain forever and . . FOREVER.

Thus we poor creatures would confess again,
And thus would say eternally . . AMEN.

—*Author Unknown.*

TWO ANGELS WITH BASKETS.

THERE is a legend which tells of two angels—the Angel of Requests and the Angel of Thanksgiving, leaving Heaven to gather the petitions of men to be carried up to God. Each had a great basket in his hand. The Angel of Requests soon had his basket so filled that he could scarcely carry it, while the basket of the Angel of Thanksgiving was almost empty. God hears a great many cries for help and pleadings for favors, but not so many glad voices of praise. Of ten lepers who were healed only one returned to give thanks. So it is with most of us; we eagerly flee to God when we need help and call upon Him for deliverance and for relief; but when the blessing we sought is given to us, how many of us return to God to thank Him for the good things He has done for us?—The Mid-Continent.

"I would rather aim at perfection and fall short of it, than aim at imperfection and fully attain it."—A. J. Gordon.

For SABBATH READING.

EPWORTH LEAGUE TOPIC for DECEMBER 29.

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM.—Acts 15: 1-29.

BY GEORGE MATILE DOUGALL.

The new born Christian church had met the question as to what attitude it should take toward the Gentiles in a humble spirit, waiting simply to know what course the Holy Spirit should direct. That question so momentous; not to the Gentiles only but to the church itself, involving, its most vital interests was decided, not without opposition, but without unseemly wrangling and without any split in the church.

Now, again, when discussion among the brethren as to the reception of the Gentiles had hardly ceased, there loomed up before the church another question of scarcely less importance, and which was the cause apparently of much greater discord: On what terms should the Gentiles be admitted to the church? Were they to come under bondage to the Mosaic law before they might receive Christ and worship with Jewish Christians? Were they to bear a yoke which Peter, speaking as a Jew, said, "neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Were the Gentiles to do this ere they might be permitted to follow the commands of the Saviour, who said, "Take My yoke upon you * * * and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light?" (Matt. 11: 29, 30.)

Such questions as these agitated the early church, at this time and threatened to cause serious quarrels within it. And not at this time only, but on a number of occasions afterwards, the question whether the Gentiles should become subservient to the laws and customs of the Jews, and especially to the rite of circumcision, disturbed the peace of the church. Even Peter himself, who at the first so boldly defended the right of the Gentiles to be exempt from the Jewish ritual, was at another time timid in regard to his own conduct in the matter. Once when James had sent Jewish disciples amongst the Gentile disciples with whom Peter was staying, and with whom he ate, Peter retired from the company of the Gentiles, fearing to be blamed by "them which were of the circumcision." And for this "dissimulation," as Paul calls it, Paul "withstood him to the face" and asked him this very pertinent question: "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (See Gal. 2: 11-14.)

This incident well shows how fixed in the mind of the Jew was the notion that all who aspired to be godly must conform to the Mosaic law. It helps us to understand why the question after being once fought over and decided was not forever laid at rest, but kept cropping up again and again. The Christian Jews were brought by the leaders in the church to see that the Gospel was as much for the Gentiles as for them, but it took many a hard fight to make them see that the Gentiles had no need to adopt Judaism first, or as an adjunct to Christianity.

This matter of the circumcision of the Gentiles opens up the whole question of the relation in which Christianity stands to the laws of Moses, and treating it in this light Paul has written much upon it in his epistles. He not only maintains that circumcision is unnecessary, but makes his arguments in this connection the occasion to show all the glorious freedom with which Christ has blessed His people.

Too much pains cannot be taken to thoroughly understand Paul's teaching in this matter, for it may be that there are formalisms or traditional beliefs among ourselves which interfere with the freedom of our thought or action, or which tend to make us uncharitable towards others. There is the Cross of Christ which every Christian must bear, and there are also burdens or yokes which we are not required to bear, and which are among the impediments from which Christ came to free our feet. It may not be always easy to distinguish at once between the two, but we may learn to do so, and the study of Paul's arguments concerning circumcision will prevent many a man from assuming needless burdens.

The great revolt in Germany against ecclesiastical dogmatism, and the burdens which it imposed, may be said to have begun when Martin Luther, ascending the marble staircase at Rome on his knees, and striving thus to win nearer to Heaven, heard as if spoken to himself, the words which Paul wrote to the Galatians in connection with this very matter of circumcision. "The just shall live by faith," said Paul (Gal. 3: 11), and the words rang in Luther's ears, and he leaped to his feet, thence forth to be a preacher of the "liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." (Gal. 5:1.)

GEMS OF THOUGHT.

A BAD man most hates the things that would do him most good.—Exchange.

"LET never day nor night unhallowed pass. But still remember what the Lord hath done."—King Henry VI.

SORROWS may take from life its delight, but, thank God! they can never take its duties. At the lowest ebbs of dejection, we still have much to do.—Maurice.

IN the light of eternity we shall see that what we desire would have been fatal to us, and that what we would have avoided was essential to our well-being.—Fenelon.

MY experience of life makes me sure of one truth, which I do not try to explain; that the sweetest happiness we ever know, the very wine of human life, comes not from love, but from sacrifice—from the effort to make others happy. This is as true to me and to you as that my flesh will burn if I touch red-hot metal.—John Boyle O'Reilly.

FOR SABBATH READING.

Sabbath-School Lesson.

LESSON 13.....DECEMBER 29, 1895.

REVIEW.

By JOHN R. WHITNEY.

More than eighteen hundred years ago, the great Apostle Paul outlined this review for us. In so doing he gave us the key by which to interpret all the history of ancient Israel. According to him it points to Jesus Christ. His review was given in a wayside synagogue on the great upland plane, or table land, which characterizes central Asia Minor. The synagogue belonged to the town of Antioch in Pisidia, a town lying on the border of a lake at the foot of a mountain range which stretches through Phrygia. His audience was a mixed assembly of Jews and proselytes from the Roman and Greek citizens and the ruder native Pisidians. He and Barnabas were on their first missionary tour. They were strangers in the place. Entering the synagogue on the Sabbath day, they sat down with the little congregation, as devout attendants upon the service.

"The prayers were recited, the extracts from 'the Law and the prophets' were read; the 'Book' returned to the 'minister,' and then we are told that 'the rulers of the synagogue' sent to the new comers, on whom many eyes had already been fixed, and invited them to address the assembly, if they had words of comfort or instruction to speak to their fellow Israelites. The very attitude of St. Paul, as he answered the invitation, is described to us. He 'rose' from his seat, and with the animated and emphatic gesture which he used on other occasions 'beckoned with his hand.'" (Conybeare and Howson.)

It was a splendid opportunity to preach the Gospel to a people who probably had never heard it before, and Paul improved the opportunity. Addressing himself particularly to the Jews, he introduced his subject by a brief reference to the exodus of their forefathers from Egypt, and to their occupation of the Promised Land. Then he proceeded more fully to speak of God's dealings with them in the details of their subsequent history. A brief synopsis of his address is preserved for us.

"And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He gave them their land for an inheritance, for about four hundred and fifty years; and after these things He gave them Judges, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they asked for a king: and God gave unto them Saul, the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for the space of forty years. And when He had removed him He raised up David to be their king; to whom also He bare witness, and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who shall do all My will. Of this man's seed hath God, according to promise, brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." (Acts 13: 19-23, R. V.)

Thus the Apostle, laying the foundation of his argument on the condition of Israel in "the time of the Judges," proceeds, step by step, through essentially the same historical incidents which have been brought before us, to unfold the riches of grace in the promised Saviour, whose incarnation we considered last week.

The condition of affairs in the time of the Judges, as we have seen, was a very unsettled, restless condition. The people of Israel time and again forgot their obligations to God, and rebelled against Him. Then they suffered oppression from many adversaries. Trouble came upon them from every side. But when they repented, God raised up Judges who delivered them. There was no deliverance, however, without repentance. Every "Eben-ezer," was preceded by humble, penitent tears at "Bochim."

This condition of affairs lasted for more than four hundred years. During this period our attention was called to six great representative characters, in whom, or through whom God displayed His grace toward His people. They were, Gideon, Ruth, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan and David.

When Gideon appeared in the history the country was suffering from the inroads of the Midianites and Amalekites. Spiritually, it was indicative of a time with God's people when great worldliness and profligacy are seen on every side. But even in such times God does not forsake them. There are always some who fear and honor Him, and He hears their humble cry. Those who trust in Him, and forget themselves as Gideon did, He clothes with power and great zeal. Going in this their "might," through faith and energy, new life and hope are brought to light, and all the people about them are delivered from destruction.

In such times as these, however, many drift away as Elimelech and Naomi did to Moab. It is a time of spiritual famine, and all that Moab can give is perfectly satisfying to them. But when bereavements and trouble come upon them, then they long for something better than Moab can give. They now hunger more there than they ever did in Israel, and, like the prodigal, they turn their steps back to Bethlehem, "the House of Bread." There they find abundant provision for all their wants. And not only so, but they find a Redeemer who satisfies all the demands of the law, and buys back their inheritance for them. He even unites Ruth, the daughter of Moab, to Himself, and makes her partaker of all His fulness.

It was in such a time as this that God sent His chosen messenger Samuel to His people, to convince them of their sins, and to bring them back to Himself. By his holy and upright life, even from a child, by his faithful teaching, by his active efforts, and by his earnest prayers, he accomplished his work. The people were brought to repentance, and said, "We have sinned against the Lord." (1 Saml. 7: 6.) Then, through the appointed sacrifice, they were accepted by Him. Then they were able to drive back the Philistines, and to raise with joy and gladness the memorial of their victory, and to call it "Ebenezer."

But in process of time, the influence of the character and teaching of Samuel began to wane. Such influences often do even with God's people. He was growing old and the surrounding nations were becoming more and more threatening. Instead of drawing near to God for counsel and help, the people of Israel began to look to an arm of flesh. They believed that they must be like the world, if they would meet the attacks of the world. It is a faith that is very common even yet. In all spiritual and eternal interests they would, at least outwardly, cleave to God, but for their worldly interests they must be like men of the world. So they came to Samuel and demanded that he should set a king over them. By God's direction their prayer was granted and Saul the son of Kish was selected. He was a man of commanding stature and attractive face, a man of energy and animal courage. When they saw him they were greatly pleased, and with one voice shouted, "God save the king." (1 Saml. 10: 24.) But, like the people whom he represented, he had no trust in God, and no thought of His care. His one ambition was to exalt himself and appear well before men. Rejecting God and refusing to obey, God rejected him.

He did not, however, reject his people but raised up David, the son of Jesse, and anointed him to be king instead of Saul. Anointed as Saul had been he willingly yielded himself to the gracious influences of the Spirit of God as Saul had not. His one desire was to know and do His holy will. He knew his own weakness, and when he fell, he fell towards God, and when he rose up he went straightway to Him in penitence and faith. Saul hated him, persecuted him, and would have destroyed him, but Jonathan, Saul's son, loved him and sought his fellowship. They were one in heart and life, because they were both one with God. So is it ever with God's true children, a common faith gives them a common purpose, a united life, and the same great expectations.

> Blest be the tie that binds
> Our hearts in Christian love,
> The fellowship of kindred minds
> Is like to that above.

Anointed by the Spirit of God, we soon find David as the representative of God's people, in mortal conflict with the great enemy who would have destroyed them all. But strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, Goliath is slain. Moreover, when David conquered, all the people were made strong. Because he was victorious, they were able to drive back their enemies, and themselves gain a great victory.

With all this history before us how easy it is to step up from this earthly plane to the higher plane of what St. Paul calls "the glorious Gospel of Christ!" (2 Cor. 4: 4.) How naturally St. Paul himself took this step, when he addressed the people of Antioch in Pisidia! "Of this man's seed," he said, even of the seed of David, the son of Jesse, "hath God, according to His promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." This is that Saviour who was brought before us last week. "Very God of very God," and yet very man of very man. He was "the second Adam"—"the Lord from Heaven." Standing before God and all the heavenly host as our representative, His holy "arm brought salvation" to His people. (Isa. 59: 16.) By his life "without sin," He became "the end of the Law, for righteousness to every one that believeth"; (Rom. 10: 4;) and by His death upon the Cross, He paid the penalty due to all sin and made atonement for the transgressors. Through His victory over sin and death, and "him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil" (Heb. 2: 14), all His people are more than conquerors. And all this He did "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3: 16.) For "Him hath God exalted with His right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5: 31.)

BRYN MAWR, Pa.

RUSSIAN PROVERB: One pound of learning requires ten pounds of common sense to apply it.

SURELY, if all the world was made for man, then man was made for more than the world.—Duplessis.

Sabbath Reading.

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SPECIAL NOTICE.

Please do not send us contributions of any kind for SABBATH READING, as the Editor has not time to examine them and cannot attend to the return of manuscripts.

"AS A LITTLE CHILD."

Not with the brightness of the sun
Our Messiah came,
But a helpless little one,
Glory to His name!

Why did the King of Glory come to earth as a little child, and as a particularly poor child at that?

One reason at least for this strange anomaly is easily found. Christ came to "turn the world upside down"—to upset all the world's theories and introduce an entirely new set of ideas and of principles of action. He came to teach, for one thing, that true greatness does not consist in outward pomp, or power, or wealth, nor in physical or mental capability, but in gentleness, meekness, faith, consecration, service.

"Not by might, nor by power," but by the Holy Spirit, working in and through humble, trustful, obedient hearts—it is thus that Christ has undertaken to introduce and to spread His kingdom on earth. And for this reason He not only came Himself as a little child, but He declared that every one that desired to enter His kingdom must come "as a little child."

Man works by power; God works through weakness.

Great men, strong men, wise men, confident in their own greatness or wisdom or strength, would be a hindrance and not a help in spreading the Kingdom of Christ, because their actions, their words, their looks, and even their thoughts would be all the time giving the lie to the truth on which the Kingdom of Heaven is founded. It is by the instrumentality of humble, lowly, grateful hearts and tongues that the Kingdom of Heaven is to be brought near to men's lives; for the proud, the self-willed, and the self-satisfied cannot do that work: the Spirit of God cannot work through them.

The lack of spiritual life and power which is felt in almost all the churches of the present day, and which is so often acknowledged with sincere regret, could, we believe, in most cases be traced directly to a disregard of this fundamental principle, taught by the Master and exhibited so strikingly in His own life. The rich, the successful, the self-confident, are honored in our churches and chosen to fill the offices of the church. The poor, the humble, the self-forgetful are ignored, or at best patronized in a spirit of would-be-generous condescension.

If Christ should come into many of our churches to-day in the guise of a poor carpenter from the country the chances are that He would receive a very cold welcome, and that His suggestions would be rejected out of hand as too radical and cranky to be worthy of serious consideration. Is it not so?

And this same misconception which works so much mischief in our churches is equally destructive to the vitality of our personal religion. Outward and tangible success is more attractive to every one of us by nature than the development of our own spiritual faculties. We yearn for recognition and credit among our fellows far more than we yearn for recognition and credit with God.

In other words, we are not satisfied to go through the world as little children, fearing, trusting, serving God; praising Him for His constant care over us and His kindness toward us, and rejoicing above all things in the privilege of being co-workers with Him. On the contrary, we insist on getting self in somewhere, and pushing it to the front, to claim the credit for our "good" actions and to demand a reward in present comfort and prosperity. We are perhaps willing enough to acknowledge that we could not have received the kingdom of Heaven otherwise than as little children, but having become citizens of the kingdom, as we believe, we hasten to put away the "little child" spirit of trustful submission and humble obedience and to put on the self assertive spirit of manhood. And so, instead of growing up to spiritual manhood by working out God's thought in our lives, we stay in the nursery trying to work out our own ideas of life.

So did not Christ. To the end He was the same humble, trustful, childlike servant; seeking only to know and do the Father's will.

And Paul, who perhaps more than any other man had a right to say "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ"—Paul like his Master cherished this childlike spirit of self-distrust and dependence. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities," he writes, "that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Oh, that the Church of Christ, which He has redeemed at so great a cost, would rise to a truer appreciation of the revelation of God that is given to us in the life and death and teachings of our Elder Brother!

Oh, that church members everywhere would lay hold of this truth, which was preached to Paul by the risen Lord Himself, and which is the explanation of His own earthly life: "MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS."

Should any of our subscribers receive an extra copy of SABBATH READING we ask as a great favor that he or she will give it to a friend or neighbor. Often this will prove a successful way of sowing good seed. Let no copy be wasted.

SOWING BESIDE ALL WATERS.

TO THE EDITOR: As I noted the appeals in late numbers of the WITNESS and also in SABBATH READING for a rally among their subscribers to increase the circulation and extend the seed-sowing of these excellent papers, I responded "Amen!" from the bottom of my heart, but I said it to myself, and really to no profit; so I feel I ought to say it to be heard of others—indeed, "at the top of my voice," whatever that may mean, and I take it in this case it signifies making myself heard as far and by as many as possible. Therefore I have asked for a grant of space to offer a word or hint to my fellow-readers of these good papers who, like me, consider them worthy of remunerative and enlarged patronage, and that the world is in need of the truths and teachings they disseminate.

Here is my suggestion: Pay for a year or a half-year's subscription of either or both papers, to be mailed from publication office to some one or several whom you purpose to remember at holiday season. When you reason that a Christmas or New Year's card of any pretension would cost as much as 52 numbers of SABBATH READING say, and that nothing you could purchase within that sum would last and count through the entire year as would this weekly reminder of your thought, and "feast of good things" in itself—does it not seem a most practical proposition? Try the experiment, and see if you do not double and treble your returns by the investment—insuring a "Happy New Year" for yourself, for the publishers you encourage, and for the recipients you bless.

If I may not speak as one having authority, I can as one having experience, and therefore assurance, along this line.

The 32d chapter of Isaiah which opens with the Messianic prophecy, closes with the beatitude, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters"—an appropriate theme and thought for Christmas-tide. Unto some is given eloquence of tongue to plead and to pray that His kingdom may come and His will be done on earth, and the Christmas message, "Peace on earth, good-will to men" finds fulfillment; unto others is given eloquence of quiet industry toward the same end. Unto none is denied the ability to obey the Master's command to "Occupy till I come" by doing with might what the hand finds to do. Unto each is given the instruction: "Sow thy seed * * * withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

LILLIAN F. LEWIS, Brooklyn, N. Y.

[We thank Mrs. Lewis for her sympathetic letter, and to meet her last suggestion have made a special offer to be found on page 14. That offer will show you how far you can make 40 cents go. —THE PUBLISHERS.]

Common Sense Talks
TO YOUNG MEN

George R. Scott.

As this issue is the Christmas number of SABBATH READING it seems to be in order to say something about the spirit of Christmas to young men.

The best way to observe the day is to do all you can to make others happy. That is a very cheap way of getting a large supply of happiness for yourself.

Jesus was born into the world to make others happy, and His appearance was the cause of great joy even among the angels.

Christmas Day in well-regulated families should be the happiest day in the year. And young men, composing part of the family, should not be behindhand in doing their part to make sunshine for the occasion. Father and mother must not be expected to do all the self-denial in order that the little ones may be well cared for; but the young men of families, who are earning something, should not even wish to be excused, but should take hold with alacrity in helping Santa Claus to do the right thing.

One of the pleasures of life is to give that which it pinches you to give. Such giving brings a peculiar feeling that cannot be enjoyed any other way. I well recollect a gift to my sister that cost me ten cents, but it took ten weeks of self-denial to be able to present the gift, as my only source of income was a cent a week. That Christmas was when I was a boy, but I still enjoy the feeling of pleasure that the gift produced.

Christmas Day to a young man should be a day when he tries to be a MAN in every sense of the word. Mother should be made to feel that her boy is something more than a boy, and so should father. And the "tots" of the family should be given to understand that they have a great, big brother, who looks after their interests and comfort the same as papa does.

A young man in a household should not be a nuisance, but a comfort and a prop on which to lean. A well-regulated home is a school in which the boys of the family learn how to be good husbands and fathers.

Young men, get up early on Christmas morning and get your little brothers and sisters out of bed and show them what Santa Claus has put in their stockings. And do not forget the night before to hang up the largest stockings that father and mother wear—and see that Santa Claus does not overlook them—for your parents would not object to being remembered by old Santa Claus.

At my home, on the morning of the 25th of December, a stocking will be found hanging up marked "Grandma." She is now eighty-two years of age, but she will look as pleased at what Santa Claus gives her as my next to the youngest grandchild. I had a new grandchild last week—as pretty as a doll. Would not sell her for $1,000.

To the thoughtful young man Christmas day has its solemn thoughts as well as its joyous thoughts. The birth of Jesus was a very eventful period in the world's history. After that the world made progress in civilization, for genuine civilization is Christianity. The Saviour in a manger meant more comfort to the world than it ever had before—though not to Him. The arrival of our Redeemer on earth ushered in more kindness than had been thought of before. His birth not only meant salvation hereafter to those who earnestly desired it, but also salvation here from various evils that had existed on earth. We are all happier and better provided for on earth because Jesus came and dwelt among us.

It makes no difference how simple and inexpensive the gifts may be that you give to others. All that is necessary is that they represent a willing, self-sacrificing disposition.

Young men, I want you to believe me when I say that from my heart I wish you "A Merry Christmas."

THE TRIALS OF THE OVERSENSITIVE.

"THAT dear child is so very sensitive," said a mother, pityingly, as her eleven-year-old daughter, with tear-filled eyes, stumbled out of the room, knocking over a footstool in her haste to be gone. "I am always on the alert to save her. But few days pass in which Ethel does not suffer keenly. Her father and brothers will not always be considerate, and the child's gentle spirit is easily wounded. Now she will cry for a half hour, and be wretched the remainder of the day, and all because papa was vexed that she forgot to call at the postoffice on her way home from school."

"Is it part of her daily duty to bring home the mail?" I asked.

"Yes," said the mother, a little reluctantly, "but you know how it is with schoolgirls. They are at the age when it is not possible always to remember an engagement. Their little lives are so full of pleasures, and they have not yet learned to assume cares, these little girls. I tell papa that Ethel will be more thoughtful by and by, and that we cannot expect as much steadiness of her as of her great, strong brothers."

This golden-haired, beautiful Ethel, her one daughter and her youngest child, was the darling of my friend's heart and the very apple of her eye. She lingered about a few moments, restless and uncomfortable, and then stole out of the room, and presently I heard her moving about overhead in Ethel's pretty little chamber. Down the street I caught from the window a glimpse of papa, whose hasty speech had wrought the mischief. His broad back and plodding steps seemed pathetic to me, as I thought how tired he was after his day's work, and knew that he was wending his way to the postoffice to perform Ethel's neglected errand. Everybody made to feel more or less in the wrong because one petted child had been reproved, and had gone off grieved in consequence! It did not appear quite fair.

It was not of Ethel's little fit of the sulks nor of her mother's mistaken tenderness I thought longest on that sweet Autumnal afternoon, for one thought starts another, and I recalled this person and that, who had gone much beyond childhood, enduring keen and often needless anguish because of a disposition too readily sensitive to blame or fancied unkindness. Such a disposition torments its possessor, inflicting pain to which the blows of a whip would be light by comparison, yet, strange to say, it would almost appear that the unfortunately oversensitive person watches for slights and welcomes wounds, so often are they received when none are intended.

In the family the opportunities for hurting the sensibilities of the easily injured one are manifold. A chance word at the table, a word unsaid when praise or compliment was desired, a bit of criticism however gentle, an absent or preoccupied look, will upset the dear one for the day, and the atmosphere will become electric. It is always the dear one, mother, elder sister, sometimes father or brother—though rarely, for the stronger sex are less given than ours to what in children we call tantrums—whose feelings are hurt. Singularly, in most households the ill-tempered and pesky are more studied and in effect more beloved than the amiable and sensible. There are gray-haired Ethels, who have gone on through long lives, exacting forbearance and consideration from their relatives on the score of their remarkable sensitiveness, and so they will do to the very end.

And in the larger family of the Church, who does not know the brother or the sister whose feet are too easily trodden upon, who withdraws from this and the other department of work, and will no longer support his pastor or continue in fellowship with the friends in the society, hitherto his comrades and trusted companions, because he has been ignored or opposed or wounded? It becomes each of us to ask whether we have never erred in this way, whether we have at no period put a stumbling-block in a brother's road through our jealousy for ourselves.

Over-sensitiveness is often the product of a morbid love of self. Vanity takes fire at a touch, and vanity is resentful and implacable. Except in the earliest years, outside help avails little to overcome a defect so grave; children may be guided toward a better and happier life, and taught to cultivate the charity that seeketh not her own; but in older persons this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. If, as may happen, you or I are over-sensitive, is it not worth while at once to set about eradicating a fault so grave and with consequences so undesirable in our social intercourse?—Margaret E. Sangster, in the Congregationalist.

THE atmosphere of a house is what makes it homelike. Every living creature has an atmosphere of his own. He can be as chilly and damp and disagreeable as a March wind; he can be as bright, cheerful and charming as a June morning; he can be as dark and impenetrable as a November fog, or as crisp and electric as a day in December.—Presbyterian Messenger.

BEFORE we give up Christ for the pursuit of riches, hadn't we better ask a millionaire how much money it takes to make one happy?—Exchange.

For SABBATH READING.

JESUS CAME TO SAVE THE POOR.

The annual meeting of the New York City Mission and Tract Society, held in the West Presbyterian Church on December 8, was of more than ordinary interest. Each speaker was limited to ten minutes which was used in giving sketches illustrative of the work that the mission is doing.

Mr. Keer of the Broome Street Tabernacle was first introduced. He said:

"There are three reasons why mission ary churches should be supported. The first is a patriotic one. The gates of the Atlantic have been standing open and foreign immigrants have been pouring in. The children of these immigrants receive an education in our public schools, but it is to the mission churches that they owe that moral and religious training which lays the foundation for their future welfare.

"The second reason is loyalty to the cause of Christ. If we love our Master how better can we prove our devotion to Him than by going out into the highways and byways, seeking to bring souls into the feast that has been prepared.

"The third reason why missionary churches should be established is the salvation of souls. The Broome Street Tabernacle is the only English speaking Protestant church in the Fourteenth ward, which has a population of 30,171. We have a church membership of four hundred, and we have seven hundred scholars in our Sabbath-school. We have thirty-two services a week. Last week two hundred communicants sat down at the Lord's table. They represented many nationalities. There were English, Scotch, Irish, American, German, Scandinavian, Hebrews, and one Algerian.

"We have many difficulties to contend with. Within an average distance of two hundred feet of the church there are twelve saloons, breeding places of vice, and a hindrance to the work. Because of their unpleasant home surroundings, the young men are forced into the streets or saloons. You must make things bright, and pleasant, and cheerful. You must let them feel that the religion of Christ is a real, living thing, and that is what the Broome Street Tabernacle aims to do."

Mrs. Campbell, one of the missionary nurses, was the next to speak. She said:

"It is almost impossible to give you any idea of a nurse's work in the slums. She is not only a nurse, but in many cases the physician, and even undertaker. Her ministry is to poor, suffering woman, and as she goes from one squalid home to the other, bringing tangible cheer and comfort in the shape of medicines, gruel and flannels, her chief aim is to impart to all with whom she comes in contact a knowledge of Christ.

"The ignorance of the people is one of the greatest difficulties the nurse is obliged to contend against. Not long ago a child was seriously ill with pneumonia. The parents called in a doctor, not the most expensive one, but the cheapest. When the nurse from the mission called the next morning she found the room stifling hot and filled with sympathizing neighbors, each one eager to prescribe her favorite remedy. The doctor's orders had not been carried out, because one old woman declared that red flannel and hot grease are the finest things to use, and there's no need of wasting money on apothecary's stuff. The doctor's prescription is stuffed in an old broken teapot or an upper shelf. It is but the work of a few moments for the nurse to clear the room, put clean sheets and warm, soft coverings over the little sufferer and send out to have the prescription filled.

"Another day, climbing the dingy, reckety stairs of a tenement house, the nurse found her way into a room that was simply filthy. On the bed in a corner, rolled in a dirty comforter, lay a little child burning with fever, its temperature being 105. In less than twenty-four hours all this was changed, and the little one lay in a cool bed in a ward of the Presbyterian Hospital.

"There are hosts of sick ones in dark, disease-breeding tenements who are being cared for by our nurses, and whose families are being taught carefulness and cleanliness."

Mr. Leonhard, the German pastor of the De Witt Memorial Church, said:

"Mission work is the foundation of all our work. It is not enough to plant churches among the people; you must plant the people in the churches, and you can only do that in one way, by going out after them. My work lies in the cellars and in the garrets.

"Come with me into a dingy, dark cellar, and there you will find a poor man lying on a shabby sofa. He is a tinsmith, but is so prostrated by disease that he works half an hour at his trade and then lies down to rest for an hour. But speak to him of Jesus, and the tears will roll down his cheeks, while his face will lighten up and he will tell you how good God is to him, and how He comforts him and supports him in all his trials.

"In another place, in a rear room, sits a man, a giant in size, with a face like a savage bulldog. But he is not savage. He is as gentle as a lamb. He used to be the terror of the neighborhood, but now through the grace of God, his rough, savage ways have disappeared, and the little ones come in and play around his chair while he tells them of the love of Jesus. These are only two examples of the many whose hearts have been changed by accepting Christ as their Saviour and their friend."

Mr. Arrighi, of the Italian Evangelical church in Worth street, said:

"With great thankfulness to our Heavenly Father we are able to report great success in our work among the italians in New York. These strangers from Rome have greatest need of your sympathy and your help. There are one hundred thousand of them in your city, ignorant of your laws, ignorant of your customs, and ignorant of a God who saves. They come here filled with the superstitions of their native land, but the work among them has been much blessed. It is most gratifying to see how quickly the Italian people grasp the meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and to-day hundreds of them have been saved by the grace of our blessed Master, and are rejoicing in the hope of eternal life. From the Italian church in Worth street three Presbyterian ministers have gone out—one to Italy, to bring the message to the people there. God indeed is good to these strangers from Rome."

Mrs. Bainbridge, president of the Woman's Branch, said, "The aim and object of the Woman's Branch of City Missions is:

To carry the Gospel of Christ to all homes in the lower part of the city, even the most degraded.

To elevate in their homes the families, by teaching the wives, mothers and sisters those things that will be for their physical, moral and spiritual advantage and prepare them better to fulfil their duties.

To reach the children, and by planting early seeds of industry, honesty, temperance and truth, cheat the tares of a harvest and help the children to become good men and women.

To minister to the sick poor, providing things necessary for their recovery in their homes, or removing them to hospitals if necessary.

Charitable societies search out the worthy, we the unworthy, in the full belief that the blood of Jesus will cleanse the foulest, and the Holy Spirit teach and sanctify the most ignorant and degraded.

"One little anecdote will show how the mission keeps in touch of the work:

"A young woman with a little child was invited into our mother's meeting, and while she was there her little one was placed in the day nursery. After a time the mother was converted, and sought to lead her husband to Christ. But she met with no success. He was a good man, but an unfortunate one. He had been looking for work for weeks without success, and when another little one came he was almost in despair, for there was no money to even provide it with clothes. Here the Dorcas Society stepped in and provided an outfit for the baby, while the mission sent in a nurse and doctor.

"One morning the husband left saying: 'If I get work to-day, I'll come home, but if I don't, you won't see me any more.'" The day passed, and night came on and he did not return, and the morrow came and passed, and still no word from him.

"The missionary came in and comforted and supported the mother during the days and weeks of trial that followed. With her she went from police court to morgue, from one prison to another, paying for advertisements in the papers, and doing all in her power to help the poor woman. The little girl was sent to the country home of the mission, and a place was found for the mother where she could keep her baby with her.

"One night, at the close of one of our open-air meetings, a man, pale, haggard and worn, was seen standing on the edge of the crowd. The minister went to speak to him, and found that he was the husband we had been looking for all those months. His story was simple: he found no work, and, seeing a ship that was short of hands, he embarked, and on his return, with his money intact, he had looked for his wife and found her gone.

"That night he found a Saviour; in a few days he was re-united to his wife and little ones. The Dorcas Society fitted them up a little home from the furniture that is sent to it from time to time, a position was found for the husband, and to-day as a Christian family they are worshiping God as their Saviour.

MISSIONARY CAMPAIGNING IN THE PLAIN OF SULDUZ.

REV. FREDERICK G. COAN, OROOMIAH.

SULDUZ is compounded of two Persian words signifying "watered" and "level." It is a plain about fifty miles long, and from five to ten miles wide, lying directly south of Lake Oroomiah, which forms a part of its northern boundary. A lofty range from 12,000 to 14,000 feet high rises at its western end, while on the south and east, grassy mountains of lower elevation surround it. These, with the adjoining beautiful plain of Lajan, are peopled by

Kurds and nomadic tribes that depend largely on Sulduz for supplies. There are about one hundred villages on the plain, and the population consists mainly of Kara Popaghs, meaning "black-hatted." These Kara Popaghs are Mohammedans who formerly lived in the region of Ardabil, between Tabriz and the Caspian. They were brought to Sulduz sixty-four years ago by the king to protect his borders at that point from the Kurds, who had made the region well-nigh uninhabitable.

Sulduz was then a treeless plain, occupied only by nomadic tribes and Kurds, who used it as a pasturage. The Kara Popaghs were exempted from all taxes, and the plain was given to them for all time. A strong band of chiefs, belonging mostly to one family, cultivate it by sharing half the produce with their subjects. They are, on the whole, a fine, manly race, very fond of the chase, splendid horsemen and hunters, and brave in war.

The Kara Popagh chiefs are very friendly and cordial to our missionaries, and seem to deeply appreciate all that we are doing for the people. Some of them treat their Christian subjects with even more deference and consideration than those of their own faith, and delight to do honor to the missionary when he is there. Their hearts have been drawn to us by the kind services of Dr. Cochran, who has a wonderful reputation and influence among them, and has won their confidence. Whenever he visits them, they vie with one another in their attempts to do him honor, and any favor he may ask is readily granted. One of them in particular sends annually several camel-loads of provisions, consisting of rice, wheat, butter, sheep, etc., to the hospital, and when his wife, who two years ago had been in the hospital, heard of Mrs. Cochran's death, she went into mourning. In my recent visit they, all of them, spoke most tenderly of his great bereavement, and said: "His sorrow is our sorrow."

I might here state, as showing the confidence this same man has in Christianity, that when it was necessary to send his wife to the hospital, he said that the only man he could trust her with was our pastor in his village, and she was sent in his care.

OUR SPECIAL CONSTITUENCY.

Aside from the Kara Popaghs, who form the larger part of the population, are quite a number of Jews who reside in Nakada, the principal village of Sulduz, and also some Armenians and Nestorians. Among these latter, who are destined in time to be the leaven for this region, we have conducted mission work for a good many years, with the result of two small congregations, one in the centre and one in the eastern end of the plain.

The plain of Sulduz is well watered by the Shatookh River, which flows through it, and is very fertile. Every inch of it is capable of cultivation, except the very eastern end, which abounds in tall reeds and is the home of wild boars and other game. The principal products are rice and wheat, which are exported in large quantities. Without Sulduz wheat and rice there would be great scarcity in Oroomiah.

REFUGE FROM THE STORM.

On Friday, the fourth of January, I left for an evangelistic campaign in Sulduz. A severe snow-storm, which nearly blocked the roads, delayed me so that I traveled only about twenty-five miles the first day, reaching a Kurdish village, where I stopped for the night. As there are no hotels, I went to a Kurdish house where strangers stop.

The house consisted of one room, which was so dark when we first entered that we could not see anything. Soon we made out a group seated on the floor around the tandoor, or oven, which is a hole in the ground. A kursee, or low table, is placed over this in Winter, and a large comforter thrown over it to retain the heat. Around this kursee, with the comforter drawn up to their chins, sat the family—an old man, his son and wife, their three children (a boy of six, a girl of four, and an infant of seven months), and a servant.

Asking whether they had accommodation, I was made welcome and bidden to get under the comforter. I preferred, however, to sit on a small piece of felt carpet which was spread out, and then commenced to make myself at home, glad of this opportunity to study the style of domestic life, which is common among millions in this land.

The woman gave me to understand that it was only my nationality that gave me access to their inner sanctum, and that others were given an outside room. Looking around the room I found it well filled. A great pile of the fuel made from manure in one corner, farming implements in another, and wheat piled up in a third. A sack of bedding was on one side of the room, and some earthen vessels, pots and water jars were scattered about. It was two o'clock, and being hungry, I asked what she had to offer, and was told four eggs, which she proceeded to cook.

After the meal, many questions were asked, and the old man, who seemed very religious, prayed quite frequently. Each time a large basin was brought, in which he carefully washed hands, face and feet before saying his prayers. He asked how we prayed, and that gave me a chance to talk to him of the true meaning of prayer. In the house itself, obedience or parental discipline were things unknown. If, after coaxing, the boy refused to do what his mother told him, the vilest kind of abuse and swearing were indulged in, and language used such as is never heard in a Christian land. The little fellow could swear back quite as freely as his mother, and it sometimes seemed to turn her anger into laughter when she saw what an adept he was at it.

AN UNNATURAL MOTHER.

The baby was very sick, and lay quietly in a few rags, with a mute appeal in its eyes that was most touching. As the evening meal was served, a dish was given to the children, who greedily plunged their hands into it. The baby tried several times to raise itself in order to reach the dish, and finally fell near it, when thrusting its wasted hand into the bowl, it tried to get some food.

It was evidently starving to death for want of food. I asked the mother why she did not feed her child, and she said: "I have no milk." "But, could you not get some?" "Yes, there is plenty, but would they give it to me for nothing?" So the poor little girl was to starve to death, because its mother would not spend one cent a day to keep it alive! After the evening meal, all listened very attentively, while, for the first time, they heard the story of the Cross. "That is a beautiful religion," said one of them, when I had finished.

If any of my readers fail to appreciate he blessings of a Christian home, would hat they might enter that squalid, cheerless, Christless home, and compare it with the beautiful, refined homes we have! What makes this great difference?

COMMENDING THE TRUTH.

We reached Sulduz about noon, riding for hours over white hills and mountains, without a sign of life. During the nineteen days spent there we held forty-four services. Our main efforts were devoted to the four centres where we had helpers. A baby organ had been brought along, the first one to visit Sulduz, and as its reputation spread abroad, the places where meetings were held were packed. A Nestorian layman who was with me, and had learned to play the native airs, presided, and elicited great praise for his skill. After a few airs and hymns, came the preaching—a short practical sermon without notes, then always an after-meeting for those who seemed especially interested, when we tried to bring them to a decision. The audiences were very attentive, and composed of all nationalities, so that a good deal of the preaching had to be done in Turkish.

In one village after the service, a young Kurd rose and said: "God have mercy on the teachers who have so terribly deceived us. If we could hear such truths as these every day we would be different men." Many expressed great surprise at the beauty of the Gospel and its teachings. At one service, the chief of all the plain came, paying rapt attention. He seemed very desirous, and remained for a long talk. "You have made all so clear, only one thing remains, I can't see how Christ was the Son of God." Only those who have labored in Mohammedan lands can realize what a stumbling-block this is. Only His Spirit can convince them that Christ is the Son of God.

A RIPENING HARVEST IN SULDUZ.

After nineteen days, the work grew so that help was needed, and Dr. Israiel, a very earnest and successful worker, came and continued the campaign for one month longer. The results were that outside of the great number who heard the Gospel for the first time, twelve were added to the two little churches which we have at Chiana and Okhsar. Who can tell how much of the seed sown may, years hence, bring forth fruit?

Truly, the fields are white and ready for the harvest, but the laborers are so few! At the most, a missionary can only visit this field twice a year, and now one of our five laborers for not only Sulduz, but all that lies about it, is dropped on account of our retrenchment. This man only drew a salary of $72 a year, but it had to be saved!

Sulduz needs not only five laborers, but it needs greatly the services of just such a Christian physician as Dr. Israiel; if only such a man could be helped to get a start in the way of some buildings and medicine, which could be all done for $500. The Chief Ruler, or Governor of Sulduz is greatly interested in such a plan, and would help us to carry it out. Such a doctor would have an unlimited field for usefulness, reaching not only Sulduz, but the Kurdish tribes all about it as well.

We also need in that locality two plain church buildings for our congregations. The two could be put up for $300. Is it not possible that these modest demands may be supplied? Oh, that the Church at home might rise to the great task before it, and with its means, its sons and its daughters embrace the grand opportunities that await it.—Church at Home and Abroad.

An Hour with the Bible.

How many disciples did Jesus choose to be apostles? What were their names? Which were the two pairs of brothers? What did Jesus call James and John? What other name did He give to Simon? What does that mean? What does John call himself in his Gospel? Which of the apostles betrayed Jesus, and what became of him? How much money did he get for betraying Jesus, and what did he do with it? Who did Jesus appoint afterwards to be the apostle to the Gentiles, and where did Jesus meet this new apostle?

Christmas Eve in Miss Fielding's Parlors.

BY SEMANTHE C. MERRILL.

"OH dear! If Cottage Row was only somewhere else! One cannot even enjoy the sunset!" thought Laura.

She sat by the window in the short December twilight in a fit of homesickness. Christmas, always to her a time of glad excitement, was only three weeks distant. Her parents were in Europe and her father in ill health. Her presents for them had been despatched two weeks ago and her other arrangements made before they had sailed. Her only intimate friend was absorbed in preparations for the wedding of an older sister who was to be married on Christmas Day.

Aunt Rachel's handsome parlors were never opened. There was nothing to do but to sit in the stuffy sitting-room and look at Cottage Row. The sight of the wretched rooms and ill-clad occupants, as a light appeared in one after another of the uncurtained windows, called forth her soliloquy.

Meanwhile Aunt Rachel, book in hand, fidgetted nervously in her chintz-covered chair.

"Home-sick, I s'pose," she thought; "wants great Christmas doings. But it is trouble enough to have her here. She needn't think I'll open the parlors for a Christmas tree."

"Aunt Rachel," said Laura, "the church bell is ringing. The girls cannot be coming. I cannot go alone. Please go to-night, auntie."

Miss Fielding yielded ungraciously, saying, "I don't want you in the dumps all the time."

They had scarcely started when Caro Morton joined them. Miss Fielding was ashamed to go back, but she thought regretfully of her easy-chair.

In the brightly-lighted chapel the organ was playing softly when they entered.

"Humph!" muttered a thinly-clad girl as she saw the girls robed in sealskin and plush, "it would be easy to be good if you was warm and handsome like them."

The theme of the evening was the approaching festive season and its import, commemorating the birth of Him who came to bring "good tidings" to all and that "the poor might have the Gospel preached to them."

"Dear friends," said the leader, "let the humblest of us make the Christmas-tide happier to at least one heart."

"Wonder how he thinks I can do it!" muttered Meg.

"I hate 'em, she said, when the girls passed her on the sidewalk, and she threw a piece of ice upon Laura's beautiful cloak.

When she reached home and saw Nat's pale face, she thought, "Perhaps if I do errands for Sam Brown he'll give me a gingerbread horse for Nat."

It was late before Laura slept that night. "The poor, the poor!" kept ringing in her ears, and Cottage Row with its needy inmates reproached her.

"I have found gifts for all my happy, well-cared-for friends," she said, "but not a thing for the poor. I have even wished them out of my way."

In her dreams she saw the wan face of crippled Nat and other destitute ones pleading for help. She woke sobbing, and repeated over and over, "He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor."

Miss Rachel sat long in her chintz-covered chair, though it was far from an easy one. Conscience was awakened and showed her self-worship in a vivid light.

"Self, self! I have let it crowd out all my friends, shut up my treasures and my pleasant rooms. In this room I have set up its throne and worshiped it."

Laura found her snappish and irritable the next morning, and she almost trembled when she went after school with Caro and Belle to ask her aunt's approval of their newly-formed plan.

"Oh, Miss Fielding," began Caro, "we have such a nice plan for Christmas Eve, and we want your advice. Mamma is so much occupied I ought not to ask her."

"For Christmas?"

"Yes, Miss Fielding. We want to make a Merry Christmas for some who have none to do it for them. We thought we might have a Christmas-tree and invite the seven girls on Cottage Row. We want advice about getting the things they most need, and something for Meg's lame brother, Nat, too."

"And do you suppose we can get that small hall of Mr. Manson's?" asked Laura.

"You can have it here. If I throw open the parlors there will be room enough."

"Oh, thank you, Miss Fielding!" cried the girls.

"We will send dainty little invitations, signed with our three names," said Caro.

"If they will only come," said Belle.

"The others will come if Meg consents," said Laura.

But Meg was very pert and disagreeable. She "didn't want to go where folks was stuck up and too fine for her."

"I am going to make a tree for Nat," she said. "I've got a gingerbread horse to put on it, and a sprig of evergreen, and a bit of bright paper I found to cut a star out; only 'tain't large enough for a whole one."

But when told that there would be a large package on the tree for Nat she relented. "Humph!" was all she said; but Laura knew that her approval was gained, and seven tasteful invitations were sent.

A scene of light and sparkle and festive cheer met the gaze of the seven when they entered Miss Fielding's rooms. Banks of evergreens and soft, white, feathery flowers were seen in every possible place. Sparkling mottoes welcomed them; the rich hangings, luxurious sofas, carpets, and rugs made fairy-land for the uninitiated seven.

In the drawing-room a rare and delicious feast was spread, which was enjoyed before the tree was lighted. Laura had it sparkling when the guests came from the dining-room. Their wonder and delight over the varied fruits gathered from the tree cannot be told.

"Say, miss, I'm sorry I've been hateful to ye. I won't never throw nothing more at ye," said Meg to Laura as with arms full of bundles, and a soft, warm blanket to throw over Nat without waking him, she said good-night.

Nat woke in the morning so warm that his pain was less. When he saw his warm clothing, a few bright toys, and jars of beef extract to make the nourishing broth that Miss Laura had sometimes brought to him, his excitement was almost too much for his feeble frame.

Miss Fielding carried him a Christmas dinner and Laura a geranium with a bright blossom and several buds.

"Oh, put it in the window for the sun to show its bright color," he said.

"He does so love a bit of bright color, miss. I hang a bit of old red shawl in the window sometimes to please him," said his mother.

"Get some turkey-red cotton and let Meg come over and learn to make some curtains," said Miss Fielding to Laura as they crossed the street.

Three evenings each week Meg came to sew, and when the curtains were in place Nat's delight was beautiful to see. He longed for the time for the lamp to be lighted and the curtains drawn, and would laugh in his glee.

From time to time other windows were brightened with color. In some it was red, in others yellow, in others olive, until there was no uncurtained window in Cottage Row. The effect was far from artistic, but it told of increasing comfort among the occupants.

Poor crippled Nat had never known so many comforts. Laura, Belle or Caro went every day to read to him, and he would always ask for a chapter from his Testament.

"I want to hear about Him who healed folks," he said. "I try to be patient, and sometime He'll cure me," he added.

But with all his added comforts his face grew paler and his pain more severe.

Miss Fielding's easy-chair was often unoccupied while she ministered to the suffering child.

When at length his healed soul escaped from its prison of suffering, Meg shed no tears.

"Do you think I would cry because he is made whole?" she asked, when her companions accused her as unfeeling.

None who saw her brave, patient life could doubt that the touch of the blessed Healer had reached her soul.

"It was that beautiful Christmas time that first helped Nat and me," she said.

"And me!" "And me!" said others of the Cottage Row girls who had gathered with Belle and Caro to bid "good-bye" to Laura.

Miss Fielding is again alone, but frequent are the occasions when she opens her long-closed parlors, and from them light and help reach out to many of earth's destitute ones.—American Messenger.

Uncle Dick's Experience.

MRS. A. W. CURTIS.

THE clerks in the postoffice at P—— were busy sorting over the evening mail, distributing letters and papers as fast as possible.

Suddenly one of them held up a letter addressed to "Santa Claus," in printed letters of all sorts and sizes, evidently the laborious work of some little child with a lead pencil.

"Guess I'll drop that into Uncle Dick Marvin's box. He's a good fellow, without a chick in the world to care for him, except that sister of his."

An hour after, that gentleman having made himself comfortable in dressing-gown and slippers, proceeded to look over his mail. Sister Mary, who kept house for him, was chatting breezily while making the tea and putting various finishing touches to the dainty repast awaiting them.

Suddenly a hearty laugh rang out, and a cheery voice cried:

"Just listen to this, Mary! Some poor little child has written to Santa Claus, and they've dropped the letter into my box for a joke, I suppose. Such work as she's made of it, too! But I've made it out—listen:

DEER SANTA CLAWS: You dident find me at all last Crismus, caus papa was killed, and mama s harte broke, and they sent me to granny dobb, who Don't like litel gurls, and wishes i was ded to, so she cood Go and liv with ant jane. She says you never cum to her hous, But meyby you will wen you no i am here. please cum, I will leve the back dore open a crak, cause there aint No chimney, deer Santa Claws pleas cum and bring me a doily, ile hide it, so she won't burn it up.

Your pore littel gurl NELLIE BURKE.

P. S.—Our hous is by the lime kill in the woods, neer derby.

P. S.—granny is only my step-granny.

P. S.—billy Smith helped me rite this. i dont no how, he is a good boy.

"Did you ever!" exclaimed Aunt Mary, holding up her hand. "The poor little dear!" Tears actually filled her eyes and ran down her soft cheeks.

"That's certainly a providence, Dick. I'm sure of it. That poor little child is in trouble and needs a friend, and the Lord's had a hand in it, you may be sure."

"Well, Derby isn't far off, and I know just where th' 'lime kiln' is, and the old tumble-down house near by. It will be a jolly lark to play Santa Claus in earnest for once. Guess I'll try it."

"Oh, do, Dick; it will be just splendid! Wish I could go, too, but it's too cold. You'll make a fine Santa Claus, with your long white whiskers and silvery hair. If she should happen to see you, she'll think your are the genuine old fellow himself."

They laughed and chatted over the project as they drank their tea.

It was nearly eleven o'clock when he crept quietly around to the back door that little Nellie was going to leave open a crack. Pushing it gently open, he entered the room. There was a little blaze from a few dying embers in the old cracked stove, and by its side he discovered a little stocking—thin, ragged, with the holes drawn together with coarse thread in a pitiful child fashion. It was pinned to the old faded window curtain.

Santa's face worked strangely, and a tear or two actually dropped off the end of his nose as he bent and started up a brighter blaze. He heard discordant snores from the adjoining room, so he proceeded leisurely to fill the little stocking with delicious candy, nuts, and a bouncing orange at the very top. Then the lovely baby doll was comfortably arranged in her carriage, in cloak and hood, with her trunk beside it. The bundles for Granny Dodd were laid on the greasy old table, and Santa Claus was smiling and beaming as he thought of her amazement when she should discover them in the morning, and poor little Nellie's delight over her treasures, when, to his extreme consternation, he saw a little white-robed figure gliding toward him, and the next minute a pair of small arms were hugging his portly form, and a bright little face, radiant with joy, was uplifted to his.

"I knew you would come! Oh, I knew you would come!" she whispered, and the next minute Santa had a little quivering form in his arms, and she was showering kisses on his face, and hugging him with all her might.

"Oh, you dear, blessed, good Santa Claus! I knew you would come!" and overcome by her joy and excitement, she hid her face in his long, flowing beard, and cried and sobbed hysterically.

"There, there, dear, hush! Don't cry so. You'll wake up granny!"

With a frightened glance toward the bedroom, she made a mighty effort, and the sobs ceased; but still she hung fast to his neck.

"Oh, Santa, dear Santa, take me away; take me now! Granny wishes I was dead; she says so every day. I'll be so good if you'll let me be your little girl!"

"Bless you, dear!" he whispered, "what on earth could Santa Claus do with a little girl? See! Look at your stocking! See what that is under it. Don't touch them to-night; you are shivering with cold. Go to bed now, like a good little child, and you'll be happy as a lark to-morrow with your baby doll. She's a beauty, and no mistake."

Still the little arms clung fast, and the small form nestled closer in his arms; but the snores were winding up in queer, snorting groans, as if granny might be waking.

"There, there, dear, granny's waking up. You must go. See here! I'll come and see you again in the morning."

"Will you, truly?"

"Yes, truly."

With one more loving kiss, the little one slipped down and glided softly away, without even a glance at her treasures.

* * * * * *

Early the next day Uncle Dick, as everybody called him, found his way again to the tumble-down house by the lime-kiln. It did not take long to persuade Nellie's granny to part with her charge, especially after $50 had been counted out to her. After the necessary papers had been signed, and the new playthings packed, a queer little bundle of gray shawl and a happy face, with soft rings of golden hair framed in a faded old hood, was snugly tucked under the fur robes, and with a jubilant jingle of silvery bells away they flew toward the city.

As soon as Nellie could fairly get her breath, "Are you really Santa Claus; and where are we going now?"

"No, dear; I'm only Uncle Dick—Uncle Dick Marvin, and I'm going to take you home with me. I'll have to tuck you into one of Aunt Mary's stockings for a Christmas present. Won't she be surprised?"

But his brown eyes twinkled so merrily it was evident he had no fear but what Aunt Mary would say, as usual: It's just splendid! It's a providence, Dick?"

"Well, I don't care where we are going, if I may only stay with you and be your little girl."

The sleepless night and unusual excitement was too much for the little one. Long before they reached the city Nellie was fast asleep. Uncle Dick carried her in and laid her in Aunt Mary's arms.

"I've brought you a Christmas present, Mary, a gift of God to us both, for she is to be our child now."

Aunt Mary folded the little sleeper tenderly to her heart, with a glad look of joy on her face, and after snugly tucking her away in bed, hurried back to hear the wonderful story of Uncle Dick's experience at playing Santa Claus.—Christian Work.

"God Loveth a Cheerful Giver."

LITTLE Peggy Peterkins said this text over and over to herself, and aloud to grandma, who was knitting by the open fire. "Don't make any difference if I put a penny in my mite-box if I don't exactly want to, does it?" she asked. "I should think it did," was grandma's answer, "all the difference in the world." "Why, grandma, if the cent goes into the box, it does," and here Peggy gave a decided jerk to her head, just as if she were putting a cent into the box, and it went hard: "And then," she added, "it goes to help little heathen children, if I would rather have candy or something nice for dolly, doesn't it?" "Oh, yes, Peggy, it goes, but we don't know how large the blessing is that goes with it; perhaps all the great blessings go with the willing, cheerful pennies; it always seemed to me so." But Peggy shook her head, and decided that God couldn't care much if she only put the penny into the box, notwithstanding her text said, "God loveth a cheerful giver."

Just then little Nathan came into the room with his hands and face pretty well covered with molasses, and a number of sticks of molasses candy on a tin plate. "Dot a tanny party in the titchen, I has, me an' Rosa an' Harky [the cook]; me is to eat it all, too." And he held fast hold of the plate, and stood in the corner away from his sister.

"Pease give sister some," Peggy said, in her most winning tones; "that's a good boy."

"No, Nathan's tanny," said the little fellow, as well as he could with two sticks in his mouth; "me eat all tanny."

"Just one stick, just one to sister?" going nearer and nearer to the plate.

Nathan shook his head and placed one sticky hand over his stock of candy. Some words followed that were not so kind as they ought to have been, and then Nathan picked out the very smallest stick and gave it unwillingly to Peggy. She sat down by the fire and ate it; but somehow it did not taste so very good.

"Nathan gave you the candy, didn't he?" said grandma.

"Yes," said Peggy, "but——"

"Is it nice?"

"Yes, grandma, pretty nice—not so very."

It was soon eaten, and then Peggy said her verse once more and shut up her little Testament, and got out Fanny Maria, a very smart doll, and began to play, "come and see."

In a few moments her little sister Daisy came in, bringing on a piece of paper two sticks of candy. "These are yours," she said. "I made 'em; it's all I made, and it's all yours, Peggy." The loving smile, and the way she held out her treat, touched Peggy's heart.

"You are just a darling," she said, giving Daisy a kiss. "It's ever so nice eating the candy; there was no fun in eating Nathan's, he was so stingy."

"It is the same kind of candy, I sup-

pose?" said grandma.

"Yes; Harky fixed it for us," said Daisy.

"But I like Daisy's best; its real good."

"Do you know why?" asked grandma.

"Not exactly."

"Both are made of molasses?"

"Of course, grandma."

"There's something in Daisy's that is not in Nathan's?"

"Oh, no! they were just alike."

Grandma smiled and shook her head, and said, "Yes, there is. Guess what it is."

They both guessed many things, all very wonderful when thought of in connection with candy, and at last gave it up.

"Daisy put a great deal of her heart into her candy. Nathan left all of his out. We all love a cheerful giver, don't we, Peggy?" asked grandma, looking into the earnest face before her. Then the little girl understood her text.

"God loveth a cheerful giver," and if He sees your heart going with your missionary penny He may pick out one of His large blessings to go with it.—Little Helpers.

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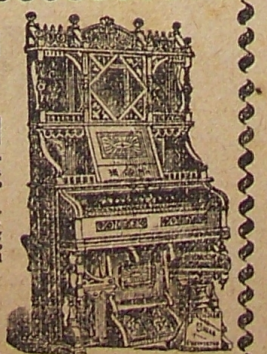

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